

Soft Targets, Hard Lessons

Why terrorists value your school as a target and what you can do

With school starting throughout South Carolina in the coming weeks, we thought this reminder might be timely.

Video tapes have been found in Afghanistan showing al-Qaeda terrorists training to take over schools. An al-Qaeda spokesman declared al-Qaeda's 'right' to kill 2 million American children in retaliation for Muslim civilian deaths in the war on terror. Recently, FBI and Homeland Security Department advisories state that 'Foreigners under recent investigation' include 'some with ties to extremist groups' who have been able to 'purchase (school) buses and acquire licenses.'

An Awareness/Prevention checklist developed in Texas and adopted in a number of jurisdictions nationwide may be helpful. It highlights areas of school operations, maintenance, security, and personnel that may pose opportunities for risk reduction. Use this checklist as a proactive tool to generate awareness over the potential for terrorist acts, at a time when it is needed most. It also contains detailed steps schools could follow to insure robust counter-threat measures are employed. The checklist includes procedures on screening employees, steps to strengthen campus physical security, and actions that can be taken to help train faculty and students to better recognize possible threats. The full checklist can be found at <http://assetcontrol.blogspot.com/2007/08/soft-targets-hard-lessons.html>.

Remember, terrorists place their intended targets under surveillance prior to attack. While vigilance alone will not prevent a terrorist attack on a U.S. school, it may prevent your school from being selected for attack. Terrorists will likely select the softest amongst all of the targets considered. These may be rural schools serviced primarily by county sheriff departments or state police agencies. If you haven't considered the possibility of a terrorist attack on a school in your district, or if your plans up to now have been solely reactive in nature, now is the time to act. Awareness is inexpensive and one of the most effective tools we have in the war on terror. Source: <http://www.assetcontrol.blogspot.com/>